

No More ALICE

By Findlay Harrigan

"ALL CARS, calling all cars," said an unemotional voice. "Frankie Tatum shot has way out of the death house at Greystone twenty minutes ago, killing two guards, wounding two others. He is loose on the countryside, armed and dangerous. All cars proceed at once to Greystone Penitentiary. Description: six feet one, one-ninety-five pounds, dressed in prison garb, prison hair cut, black eyes and hair, extremely powerful. That is all."

The driver switched off the radio, and his foot came off the accelerator. He let the car slow on compression for a hundred yards, then abruptly pulled off the road and stopped. He put his smooth, square chin in one hand, and sat for some time without movement.

He examined the country around him. It was an area of rolling hills, black and silver under the full moon, spotted with clumps of scrub oak and hawthorn. Off to his left, the blank

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walls of a deserted rock quarry were slick in the moonlight. Nearby, as he well knew, was Greystone Penitentiary.

He drew a line mentally from the prison gate to the rock quarry, started his motor, and pulled ahead about a half mile. There he stopped again. He left his lights burning, his motor running.

This would be the spot. Frankie Tatum, if he escaped the prison guards, would make for that quarry.

He sat quite still, and when his eyes caught a slight movement in his rear-vision mirror, he did nothing but stiffen a little.

The far door of the car was suddenly yanked open and a voice, harsh with desperation and cold with purpose, said:

"Don't move!"

"I had no intention of moving," the driver said quietly.

"Shut up and get out of that car—and don't try anything!"

After a short moment of silence, the driver spoke as if to a recalcitrant child who should be reasoned with.

"The car won't help you, Tatum. The highway's blocked off in both directions for miles."

"I said button up," Tatum snarled, "and get the hell out!"

The driver didn't remove his hands from the steering wheel. His knuckles were white with tension, but his voice lost none of its calmness.

"Even since I've been here, two state troopers have stopped, looking for you. I want to help you, Tatum."

"Look, Mac, I ain't in the mood for gags." Tatum raised the gun, leveled it at the driver's head. "Scram!"

"Take it easy, Tatum. I'm serious. Why do you think I sat here, with my lights on and motor running?"

The gun didn't waver, but Tatum waited for a couple of seconds, his heavy brows drawn together.

"Huh?" he said.

"I was waiting for you. I left the lights burning to attract you. You'd see this is a private car and conclude this was transportation to freedom. I left the motor running so I could get you away in a hurry. I knew you'd come along."

"Don't gimme that," Tatum said coldly. "There's miles of country here. How could you know I'd come this way?"

The driver took his hands off the steering wheel and spread them palm upward. Tatum's gun shifted a little at the movement, but he waited, tense and suspicious.

"Simplicity itself," the driver said. "That deserted rock quarry over there is the place I'd make for if I broke out of prison. And I wouldn't try to break out until I knew the hiding places nearby. You had plenty of time to get that information from inmates who know this part of the country."

"I know it. I live here. So I stopped here, when I heard you'd escaped. I waited. And here you are, right on schedule."

Tatum worried at the thought a moment longer. "I still don't see—

look here, Mac, I got nothin' to give you."

"I don't want anything. I——"

The high wail of a siren moved nearer, and the wavering beam of a motorcycle headlight showed at the far curve. Tatum jerked his big close-cropped head toward it.

"Cops!"

"There's a robe in the back seat, Tatum. Get in, lie down on the floor and cover yourself. Quickly!"

"What kinda sap you take me for?" Tatum barked. "Get the hell outa that car!"

"You have no choice!" the driver said tensely. "That trooper will be here in a few seconds. If you shoot me, or if you try to get away without shooting me, you won't get fifty feet. Get in, fast!"

Tatum swung his head in indecision between the driver and the curve ahead. He dropped his gun arm. "Okay, okay! I don't know what this is all about, but look, Mac. It better be on the level, see? There's gonna be a rod pointed at the back of your head, and I *like* to kill rats."

He slammed the door, opened the one behind it, and scrambled into the big car. He took the robe from the seat, lay on the floor and covered himself. "Don't forget this gun, Mac."

The driver fixed his eyes on the curve. He appeared to be relaxed, but his face was set like a plaster cast, and white around the mouth.

The quivering beam gave way to a motorcycle which screamed toward the big car, slowed, halted. The voice

of the siren slid down a chromatic scale to silence. The uniformed officer focussed his headlight full on the driver's face, climbed off his machine and approached with drawn gun.

"What goes on here?"

The driver waited until the trooper was close, then smiled. "Having trouble with my motor. Why? And why all the sirens?"

The officer looked hard at the driver. "Lemme see your driver's license."

"Surely." The driver handed over his billfold.

The officer looked through it, examining each card as if it were a treasonable document. "What kinda motor trouble you having?"

"It keeps heating up on me."

"Yeh? Then why you got it running now?"

"I just started it again."

"Hmm. Warren Rice. That's who you claim to be?"

"That," the driver said with some asperity, "is who I am."

"We'll see. Warren Rice? Oh."

The officer's face underwent a series of changes, finally achieving an affable smile. He returned the billfold.

"Why'n't ya say so, Doc? Didn't recognize you."

Dr. Rice shrugged, returned the trooper's smile. He stuffed the billfold back in his pocket and shifted into low gear. "All right to go ahead?"

"Sure, Doc. But you better watch it. Frankie Tatum's escaped from

the death house up here."

"Is that why the sirens are going? Who's Frankie Tatum?"

"You must remember him, Doc. Bank robber, killer. Papers full of him awhile back. Bad guy. Shoot you in the back as soon as look at you. Don't pick up anybody along the road."

Rice let the car into gear, eased it forward. "Don't worry, I won't. So long. Hope you find Tatum."

He pulled around the parked motorcycle, moved along the highway, and saw, in his driving mirror, the trooper mount his machine and speed on with his wide-open siren warning all cars of his approach. He drove along the moonlit pavement, and his mouth was curved in a grim smile.

He heard movement and flicked his eyes sideways to see the outline of Tatum's head just above the seat. "You'd better stay where you were," Rice said. "You'll be seen."

"I'll take care of myself," Tatum said. "So you're a Doc, hey? Saw-bones?"

"No. I'm a doctor of psychiatry."

"What's that?"

"I study the minds and motives of people."

Tatum digested this as they rounded the curve. "Oh, one of them brain guys. I don't get it."

"You don't get—?"

"Why you waited for me, why you picked me up. Somethin' smells here, Doc. So talk."

Dr. Rice pointed ahead to the glow of lights which were becoming brighter. "You better cover yourself

again. We're approaching the prison. We're sure to be stopped there." He waited until sounds told him Tatum had obeyed, and raised his voice.

"I want to study you, Tatum. In return for the opportunity to examine a man who is running for his life, I shall provide you with a means of escape to a safe place. The data I can get from this study more than warrant the risk involved. And," he added, "if you're worried about the risk, it's small. I'm well known and respected in these parts. I've occasionally lectured to the prison inmates."

"Now I know where I seen you," Tatum said in a muffled voice. "You talked to us once. Square pegs in round poles, all that kind of crap, a lot of comfort to a guy goin' to the hot seat."

"Be quiet," Dr. Rice said. "Here we go again."

Trees, planted by prison labor years ago, overhung the highway at this point, and at the end of the long arbor lights gleamed brilliantly. Dr. Rice drove neither fast nor slow, and when a white-gloved hand signalled him to halt before the prison gates he obeyed instantly. Before the patrolman reached the side of his car, Rice had his billfold ready and open to identification.

"Here you are, officer."

The patrolman narrowed his eyes. "Kind of quick, aren't you, bud? What's the hurry showin' who you are?"

"I was stopped down the way by a motorcycle officer. He told me what had happened."

The officer put his flash beam on the billfold. His face built to an expression of friendliness. "Okay, Doc. I didn't recognize you. Take it easy."

"Good night," Rice said. "Good luck."

He drove on between the overhanging maples, and presently Tatum's head was at his shoulder again.

"Let's get this dream talk straight, Doc. You're tradin' a getaway for the chance to X-ray my head?"

"Not X-ray, Tatum. I just want to talk to you for a few days. Then I'll send you on your way."

"And where's all this talk gonna take place, Doc?"

"I have a place up in the hills. You'll be safe there. But you won't be safe if you don't get back on the floor. Anybody standing up there off the road could see your head in this bright moonlight."

Tatum didn't move. "I been told all you guys was screwy," he said. "But this tops everything. I still think somethin's off color." He was quiet for a moment. "Okay, Doc," he said presently. "I'll play it your way. But don't forget I got a gun, and it'll be pointed at you all the time." He lay back on the floor and covered himself.

For the first time since he had stopped on the highway, Dr. Rice's square face was relaxed. His smile was pleased as he pushed the big car across the narrow green valley that lay between the prison and his home.

At the bottom of the valley was a small stream, swollen with Spring rains, lapping eagerly at the supports

of a short wooden bridge. Rice eased the car across the structure, and the popping of planks was added to the distant sound of the sirens. He drove up a winding road for some twenty minutes, turned into a graveled driveway which led past a gabled white house to garages. He drove into one, stopped.

"Wait until I close the door, Tatum."

When this was done, he turned on the garage lights. Tatum was already out of the car, and had his pistol pointed at Rice. The Doctor looked at the huge bulk, the wide shoulders, the inch of forehead between brow and hairline, the black dangerous eyes, and sighed.

"Anyone as big as you, Frankie, doesn't need a gun for someone as small as I."

Tatum in his turn examined the short, stocky man. A slow and embarrassed grin spread across his round face. "I guess not, Doc. I could break you in two. And I will, if anything happens."

"Right." Rice went to a door in the far wall. "Through here. This is an annex I built for my own private use. It leads into the main house, but I have the only key."

He opened the door, snapped on lights, and motioned Tatum through. The convict surveyed the big room, with its chairs, low tables, thick rugs, fireplace, and modest pictures.

"Say! Quite a layout, Doc."

"I use it as an office. There's another door, opening onto the driveway." He pointed. "In case you want

to go out and get caught. Beyond this opposite door is a bedroom. You'll stay there."

He led Tatum into a small room equipped with bed, dresser, chair, with a door to a bathroom. "Make yourself comfortable, Frankie. I'm going to let my wife know I'm here. I'll be back."

Tatum stood in the entrance and half raised his gun. "You ain't gettin' outa my sight, Doc. You ain't gonna call no cops to come and get me."

Dr. Rice showed contempt for the first time. "Listen to me, you fool. Don't you realize I've helped a murderer escape from prison? Did it ever occur to you that that's a felony, that I could be sent to prison for the rest of my life for it? Use your head for something besides growing hair. I'm in this as deeply as you."

Tatum, looming in the doorway, glowered for a moment at the doctor's tone. Then his face relaxed into its accustomed look of foolish friendliness.

"Yeh, now you mention it. You're in it, Doc. You coulda turned me in twice if you'd been goin' to. Okay, run along, Doc. And bring back some grub, will ya?"

He moved to one side, and Rice went through the door. He went to another door, unlocked it, entered the main house by way of the kitchen, and climbed the staircase. As he climbed, his face was stony, but it changed gradually as he neared a door off the upper hall.

By the time he knocked, he was smiling. His smile was one of tender

greeting.

"Come in," a feminine voice called from inside.

He opened the door, and a bed lamp switched on. The young woman in the bed was blonde and beautiful. She was dressed in a transparent nightgown which, in effect, bared her to the waist as she sat up. She looked at Dr. Rice, and her full, sensual mouth curled at one corner.

"Hello, *darling*." Her tone made insult of the endearment. "Back so soon?"

Dr. Rice closed the door. "I finished the case early, and came straight home."

"I didn't expect you until morning—*darling*. Had anything to eat?"

"No. I'll call Greta."

His wife flaunted her full breasts by pushing back her hair with both hands. It was lovely hair, the color of drawn butter.

"It's Greta's night off. Dooley's, too. I'll get you something."

Dr. Rice sank into a chintz-covered chair and sighed, as if from exhaustion. "Don't bother. I'll fix something."

"Bother?" Her tone was rich with content and contemptuousness. "Really, it's a pleasure, *darling*."

He looked at her, and his eyes took in each voluptuous detail highlighted by the rose-colored bed lamp. "Thanks," he said. He hesitated. "Oh, by the way. I forgot to tell you. I have somebody with me."

She tilted her mouth in a lazy, unquestioning smile. "Not Lisa Waters, by any chance?"

"No," he said. "A patient."

He looked at her tanned throat, flowing smoothly from her firm chin to the shadowed line of her collarbone. He looked at her throat for a long time.

When he spoke, his voice was cajoling, rich with embarrassment. "Alice, I'd hoped you would forget all those things we said the other night, all the disagreeable things—"

"Disagreeable—*darling*? I found them rather enlightening." She looked at the ceiling with musing blue eyes.

"It isn't every husband, so far as I know, who is so honest. Telling his wife he's in love with somebody else."

Dr. Rice made a gesture of distaste. "I'm sorry about that, Alice. I didn't mean to say it."

Her light laughter rippled again. "That I can believe."

"I mean it isn't true." His voice picked up a touch of desperation. "I'm not in love with Lisa. I never have been."

She looked mockingly across the length of her bed. "Is that why you wanted a divorce?"

Dr. Rice tightened his lips, shook his head in a gesture of despair. This caused a lock of his brown hair to fall over one eye. He brushed it away with a quick hand.

"That was said in the heat of argument, Alice. I don't want a divorce. I want us to be like we were three years ago."

Her wide mouth curled down at one corner, and her eyebrows, which were like the wings of a black hawk,

rose.

"You mean—in love?" she asked in mock surprise. "And happy? And always planning tender little surprises? Really, *darling*, you're so quaint!"

Warren Rice looked at his wife's throat again. His voice remained earnest and tender.

"We can do it, Alice. That argument was the result of overstrain. It didn't mean anything. It's done, and we can dismiss it."

"And start all over again," she said bitterly. "How sweet. How too utterly goddamned sweet."

She looked directly at him with hard, steady eyes. "Please run along now. If I hear any more of this, I'll lose my dinner." She made a gesture with one coral-fanged hand as he got to his feet. "I meant what I said the other night. I'll never give you a divorce as long as I live."

Dr. Rice said gently: "And I meant what I said tonight. I don't want a divorce. I'll never—ah, ask for one. Good night, my dear."

He closed the door behind him, went downstairs to the kitchen, and his smooth face wore a pleased smile as he fixed sandwiches with quick, sure hands.

He took the tray in to Frankie Tatum, who met him with leveled gun and glittering black eyes. The one dropped, the others softened when he saw who it was. "Gotta be careful, Doc. Say, boy, grub!"

He shoved the gun down inside the belt of his prison pants, took a sandwich in each hand, and sat on

the bed. "Now, Doc," he said through a mouthful of food, "what's this crap about studyin' me? Why me?"

Dr. Rice set the tray on the dresser, selected a sandwich, and sank into the big chair. He looked at Tatum, took in the dimensions of the man, his watchfulness, and was reminded of a jungle animal. Not a small animal, set to flee at the slightest alarm, but a lion or a tiger, lazily analyzing the jungle sounds while lying beside a fresh and half-eaten kill.

Dr. Rice chewed a mouthful of food well, swallowed it, said: "You've had a strenuous experience, Tatum. As soon as the natural adrenalin is absorbed by your body, you will want to sleep. Meanwhile, any study I should like to conduct at the moment would be obscured by your somatic exhilaration."

Frankie grinned. "I dunno what you're sayin', Doc, but it sure as hell sounds as if it didn't mean a damn thing. Can'tcha talk like a human bein'?"

"Sure, Frankie. Tomorrow's soon enough.

Tatum looked steadily at the dapper doctor.

"Tomorrow, huh? Okay. In that case, I gotta couple of letters to write to pals. They'll come'n get me. You'll mail 'em tomorrow. And look, Doc, I don't want you too far away. You better sleep in here. Just in case."

Dr. Rice analyzed the situation. He shrugged. "Very well." He took off his coat and vest. "Do you want

to sleep next to the wall?"

DOOLEY was not a man with traditions. He was not the old family retainer for Massa an' Miz Rice. He was a man hired to buttle for them, shortly after their marriage. He neither liked nor disliked the job. They paid him well enough, and the work was work anybody of his physique, years, and temperament could perform with ease.

When he received the call from the doctor's private study the next morning, he didn't raise an eyebrow. This sort of thing had happened many times; the doctor came home late, slept in his study, asked for a good breakfast.

The fact that the request was for two breakfasts this morning didn't worry Dooley, either. The doctor often installed a patient in the suite for a day or two. He relayed the order to Greta, who grumbled as usual. But she threw together, as usual, a delectable assemblage of fruit juice, ham, eggs, little pig sausages, and a great stack of hot buttered toast, while Dooley made a big pot of coffee.

"You reckon the Doc got a woman in there?" he asked Greta, and related the circumstances.

She, a college graduate, regarded Dooley with some scorn. "Does it really matter? Could one blame him? Considering what he has to contend with?" She rolled her eyes toward the second floor.

"Reckon not," Dooley said. "Dog blame me, though, if I'd bring one

to my own house."

"You'd better not ever let me catch you at it," Greta said in menacing tones. "You better not, Dooley."

"Now, look, honey," Dooley began.

While they went into the inevitable spat, Dr. Rice was at work.

"We don't have much time, Frankie," he said, after they had finished breakfast, "but there are a few things I want to ask you. We'd better begin now."

"Yeah?" Frankie said. "I don't like questions."

"Would you rather be outside in the rock quarry? It's clouding up; it's going to rain very shortly."

"Okay, Doc. You said you'd get me away. I'm still stringin' along. But I don't see why you should lead with your throat."

"Perhaps I'd better explain, Frankie. My business is the study of the human animal. I have never had the opportunity to study a man who is running for his life. Most people are running from something, imaginary or real. They try to escape their past, which is what you are doing, in effect. But nobody I have ever studied was fleeing from such a tangible past as yours—men with guns, radios, and the desire to kill. I want to know what made you into the person you are at the moment. Tell me, what did your father do for a living?"

Tatum snorted. "He was killed in a Chicago stick-up when I was two. What did yours do, Doc?"

"My father was a banker."

Tatum snorted again. "Blank check,

huh?"

"Yes," Dr. Rice said frankly. "I never really wanted for anything I couldn't have."

"We sure come outa different baskets, hey, Doc?"

"In a sense, I suppose that's true. Was your childhood hard?"

Tatum got up, lighted a cigarette, and shrugged into his prison jacket. "Hard? Hell, no. It was fun. I stole everything I could get my hands on, and run the Forty-second Street gang. We lived in a hotel, caviar one day, Blue Points the next."

"Didn't you go to school?"

"Yeh." Tatum's big face set in bitter lines. "Six years in the state reformatory. How long did you bury your nose in books, Doc?"

"About twenty years."

"Gowan! Nothin' takes that long to learn. You musta been awful dumb."

Dr. Rice shrugged. "I went through college, and then took a number of post-graduate courses. I was twenty-five before I set myself up in business."

Tatum sat on the unmade bed. "And you didn't know a damned thing. You'd never been in jail, you'd never shot anybody. What did you know about people, even?"

Dr. Rice lighted a cigarette, and let his lips curl a little. "Not very much, I'm afraid. I got married then. No, I suppose I didn't know very much. Whereas you—"

"I'd been through the mill, Doc. Hell, I'm only twenty-eight now. An' I've been through it, brother."

"Tell me, Tatum, how does it feel to kill somebody?"

Frankie Tatum blew a cloud of smoke at the ceiling. His black eyes narrowed as he thought about the question.

"Well, I tell you, Doc. It's a question of figurin', far as I'm concerned. You lay out a bank job, see? Well, you've cased the job, an' you got your time schedule down to a T. So you go in an' pull it, an' some dope you couldn't figure on turns up an' tries to be a hero. So what the hell, you plug him. Can't let some jerk get you caught. Cops push you around."

"But don't you feel any remorse?"

"What's that?"

"I mean, don't you feel sorry?"

"Hell, yes. I never wanted to kill anybody, but if they get in my way, by God, there's only one thing to do. An' don't forget that. If I go outa here dead, so do you."

Dr. Rice made a quick, nervous gesture. "Can't you see that I'm in this as deeply as you? I'm not going to let anybody know I brought you here. It would ruin the rest of my life."

"Now don't get your ears in a quiver, Doc. I just want you to keep it in mind, that's all."

"You'd kill anybody, then, who stood between you and freedom?"

"My own brother, bub, if he didn't know better than to get in the way."

Dr. Rice got up, went to the dresser and put on his tie. He picked up his coat and vest, then looked at Tatum. "You must realize that I

have a practice in town, and that I must show up at the office. If I don't, questions will be asked, and somebody will come here to investigate. So you can't keep me here without running a big risk. And the running of that risk would create bad feeling between me and you. That could be dangerous."

Tatum thought this over while the doctor finished dressing. "Yeah, I guess so. I got to trust you, I guess. Well, Doc, you seem like a square little guy, and what the hell, I ain't scared to shoot it out with cops. Just keep it in mind that I'll get you if you double-cross me."

"I'll keep it in mind, Tatum. I'll be back before you need another meal. No one will bother you here."

He rolled the service cart out into his study, telephoned Dooley to come and get it, and went to the garage. Rain had begun to fall in a steady downpour, and he pushed the big car to the limits of safety in speed, slowing to a crawl for the narrow bridge that arched over the swollen stream.

He went about his business as usual until early afternoon, when he left a waiting-room full of patients, and headed homeward through a torrent of rain.

Frankie Tatum was restless.

"Jeez, Doc, I might as well be in stir. This little room. Whatcha gonna do about it?"

Dr. Rice put flame to a cigarette, tossed Frankie the pack, and said: "I'm going to get you something to eat first. I'll have to have dinner with

my wife. Then we'll work it out."

Tatum said matter-of-factly: "I'm leavin' tonight, Doc."

Dr. Rice got up.

"I'll have some food sent to you. We'll talk it over later."

He went into the main house, gave orders to Greta for Tatum's dinner, and went into the living room.

Lisa Waters was there.

Dr. Rice froze when he recognized her, and a tremendous feeling of possession swept over him as he stood in the doorway and surveyed her brunette beauty. She was so different in all ways from Alice, except in size. She, too, was small, and had what is called a handsome figure. But her smile was soft, not satirical; her dark eyes radiated sympathy, not raillery.

"Hello, Warren," she said.

"I didn't expect to see you here, Lisa. It's—nice to have you."

"I came to see Alice," she said, "to borrow something to read."

"Hello, darling," said a metallic voice from the doorway. "My, what a handsome couple you make."

She came into the room, her beautiful body molded in clinging green wool. "Do let me fix you two a drink. I'm being a lax hostess. Sherry? Martini? Ring for Dooley, Warren. I've persuaded Lisa, with a minimum of difficulty, I might add, to stay for dinner. You're early, Warren, dear, or did you see Lisa's car in the driveway?"

"Alice, please." Dr. Rice pulled the bell cord.

Alice stood before the fireplace,

flaunting her silhouetted beauty. Her smile was mocking, her tone tender.

"Please?" she questioned. She gave a little laugh. "Oh, you mean let's don't talk about embarrassing matters. They're not embarrassing to me, I assure you. I can see why you might fall in love with Lisa. She's pretty, in her fashion, and not too illiterate, and her hands are beautiful. Yes, and I can see also," Alice continued, "why she might fall in love with you, Warren. You're successful. You make money. Well, it won't work, kids. I'm having no part of it."

Lisa got to her feet, and her bewildered eyes moved from one to the other. "I don't know what this is all about."

Dr. Rice went to her, took one of her long slender hands in his. "It isn't about anything, Lisa. She doesn't mean anything."

"No?" Alice said softly. "I mean this. You two might as well get it out of your pretty heads that—"

"You rang, ma'am?" Dooley inquired from the doorway.

Alice turned toward him. "Yes, Dooley. Martinis." She faced Dr. Rice and Lisa again, smiling sweetly. "You can't have each other, darlings. Because I won't sit still for it. Oh, I've seen your conniving, your secret glances, the under-the-table hand-clasps. You haven't fooled me."

"Please, Alice," Dr. Rice said again. His eyes were hard and steady. "You're embarrassing Lisa."

"And did Lisa embarrass me?" Alice said sweetly. "My best friend, making a campaign to steal my hus-

band under my nose?

"Did I feel at ease at the parties when she dragged you off into a corner to whisper those sweet frothy things she's so capable of whispering? Did the pitying glances of my other friends give me pleasure? Why should I spare the little bitch?"

"Alice!" Lisa gasped. She turned to Dr. Rice, tears in her eyes. "I'm going, Warren. Will you get my coat?"

"One moment," Alice said. "Let me make it clear. You two may not have each other, except over my dead body." She broke off as Dooley entered with a tray of shaker and glasses. "Shall we drink to that?"

Dr. Rice took Lisa by the elbow, led her to the hall closet. He helped her into her coat, took an umbrella and escorted her through the downpour to her convertible. Neither spoke. He helped her into the car, and stood watching until her tail-light disappeared down the driveway.

He went back into the house.

"I poured a drink for you, darling," Alice said. "They're very dry, just the way you like them."

Dr. Rice said nothing. He went through to the kitchen. "Send two dinners to my study," he told Greta, and went out to join Frankie Tatum.

"I'm going to have dinner with you, Frankie." His voice was completely unemotional. He sat down to wait Dooley's ring.

"Yeah? What happened, fight? You look like you was ready to kill somebody, Doc."

"We'll talk about it later."

Tatum loomed over him. "Maybe we'll talk about it now, Doc. If I was part of the fight, I wanta know."

"You weren't involved," Rice said wearily. "Sit down."

Dooley came presently, and Dr. Rice wheeled the cart inside. After they had eaten, he said: "I won't be gone too long. I have to check on a few things. I think we'll have you out of here tonight. I can let you have a car. Take it easy until I get back."

Alice had finished her dinner, and was reading before the fireplace when he reentered the living room. She gave him a bright empty smile. "And how is your mysterious patient, darling?"

Dr. Rice stood before her, and forced a gentle smile. "You know I don't discuss business, dear. Look, Alice, I'm sorry for my part in that scene. I want to apologize."

"I forgive you, darling. Sit down, and let's be cozy in front of the fire."

"No, thank you. I can't. I have some more work to do. I just wanted to let you know how I felt before you went to bed."

"Thank you, darling," she said mockingly. "I was just about to go upstairs."

"I'll be along later," he said, and went back to Tatum. He was frowning when he entered the room, and Tatum tensed.

"Now what, Doc?"

"Trouble, I'm afraid. My wife

"

"What's the matter with her?"

"She found out somehow that you're here, who you are . . ."

Tatum got to his feet. "What's she gonna do?" he growled.

Dr. Rice shrugged. "Call the police . . ."

Tatum put out a big hand, grabbed the little dapper doctor by one shoulder and pushed. "One side, brother, I'm on my way."

Dr. Rice staggered, whirled, and grabbed Tatum by the tail of his prison jacket. "Wait a minute! I've cut the phone wires."

"She's got legs, ain't she?" Tatum snarled over his shoulder.

"We've got time!" Dr. Rice said desperately, not relinquishing his clutch on Tatum. "Let's try to think this thing out, Tatum. Let's don't act hastily."

Tatum slowly relaxed. His huge hand, reaching for the doorknob, dropped to his side. His wide shoulders dropped, then hunched as he turned slowly. He looked down into Dr. Rice's eyes, his own small and bright. His thin mouth was a slit.

"How did she find out?" he whispered. "You little rat, how did she find out?"

Dr. Rice backed away, and put spread hands up as shields.

"Take it easy, Tatum! She just put two and two together somehow. Besides, what does it matter?"

Tatum followed him across the room in smooth strides. "The way it looks from here, Doc, you're the only guy could have tipped her off."

Dr. Rice reached the far wall. He stood still, hands up.

"Don't be a fool!" he cried.

Tatum put a hand inside his belt, pulled out his gun. "Better talk fast, Doc. Because if you crossed me . . ."

Dr. Rice drew himself to his full height. He spoke sharply, with authority. All fear was gone. "Put that gun down! I wouldn't have crossed you, I'm in this up to my ears. How do you think I stand in this, Tatum!"

Sanity came back to Tatum's small eyes. But he held the gun level. "I don't know," he said deep in his throat. "Just how do you stand? I been wondering."

"Shielding an escaped convict?" Rice said. "That's a felony. Remember? They send you to prison for that. Would I tell my wife, my worst enemy?"

Tatum's mind worried at this. "Worst enemy? Your wife?"

"She hates me, Tatum. Let's sit down, now, and figure this out. Even she isn't going out in this storm. She'll wait until tomorrow, and by that time you'll be far away."

Tatum went to the bed and sat on its edge. He still held the gun. "Okay," he said. "Start figurin'."

Dr. Rice fell into the chair, took out a clean handkerchief and wiped his hands and forehead.

"She's smart," he said. "She can listen to the radio. She knows you haven't been found. She knows I might do what I did in the interest of science. And she hates me, has for years."

Tatum looked suspiciously at Rice. "A dame must hate a guy pretty

bad, Doc, to wanta send him to the pen."

"I'd have killed her long ago," Rice said, "if I'd had the nerve."

"I never killed a dame," Frankie said. "It don't seem right somehow."

"Even if she's in your way?"

"That'd be different. No dame ever got in my way."

Dr. Rice leaned forward. A little cynical smile flickered on his mouth. "And where do you think my wife is now, Frankie?"

Tatum stared for a long moment. His mouth twisted downward. He said nothing.

"I'd even pay you for it," Dr. Rice said.

"Yeah? And then what?"

"I'd say somebody broke in—a burglar. I'd give you my other car. You could be a hundred miles from here before anybody knew about it."

"Unless you had me picked up," Tatum said.

Dr. Rice sighed in explosive exasperation. "And make myself an accessory to murder? Don't be a fool."

"Say, I keep forgettin' that, Doc. You're in this, any way you play it, ain't you?"

"This is the only way for either of us, Tatum."

Frankie got to his feet. "Okay, Doc. Where's the dame?"

Dr. Rice waved the big man back on the bed. "Give her time to get into bed. And you don't use your gun. This has to be quiet. Because if any noise is made, I'd naturally investigate. But if you're quiet, I

won't discover it until I go to bed, which will be hours yet."

Tatum stuck the gun back in his belt, and looked at his hands. "Guess these'll do. They've done before. Okay, Doc, let's have it."

Dr. Rice described the location of his wife's bedroom, and went into detail on just how Tatum should go about the murder.

"Then come back here, Frankie, and I'll have the car ready."

When Tatum went out of the room later, Dr. Rice allowed some thirty seconds to pass before he went to the dresser, unlocked a drawer and took out a small, pearl-handled revolver.

He smiled thinly, and went into the main house. As he reached the bottom of the stairs, he heard a small scream, choked off instantly.

He mounted the stairs slowly. Give Frankie plenty of time to finish the job. It took time really to strangle a healthy person.

He moved along the hall on silent feet to his wife's door.

Tatum was straightening up from the bed, his broad back silhouetted against the window. Dr. Rice aimed his pistol, pulled the trigger four times in rapid succession. The huge form half turned, and Tatum's face became visible.

One eyebrow was lifted as if in faint inquiry, and the big mouth hung open. It seemed to Dr. Rice that it was going to take forever for Tatum to fall. The knees bent first, slowly and reluctantly, giving the effect of an eccentric adagio dance.

HOW TO WRITE LETTERS

THAT GET

JOBS

by R. E. Mason

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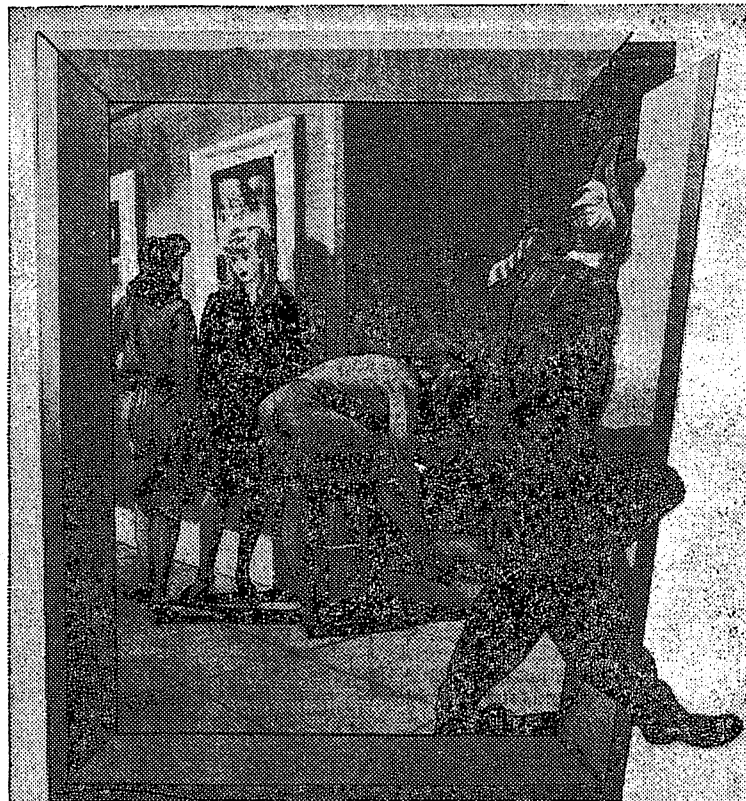
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Then all muscular tension seemed to go out of the body, and it fell with a crash that shook the whole floor, twitched once, and was still.

Dr. Rice heard a gasp from the doorway connecting with the guest room. The gasp became a horrified shriek as he whirled and pointed the little gun at the sound.

"Warren!"

The woman who stood there was Alice.

Slowly, without consciousness of

doing so, he lowered the gun to his side. Still slowly, he turned to look at the bed.

"Lisa," he muttered. "How——?"

"She came back," Alice whispered. "Bridge washed out. I gave her my room. Oh, Warren, I wouldn't have wished this on her, not this. But thank God you killed him, thank God for that. He is—dead, isn't he?"

"Yes," Dr. Rice said dully. "He's dead, all right."

In spite of Variety's review, which you have read on page 37, it was not until 1942 that SUSPENSE was heard as a series. The format was retained, but Hitchcock returned to motion pictures, and his place was ably filled by Charles Vanda, long time radio producer. When Vanda left for the army and a Colonelcy in OSS, the heavily bearded and extremely competent William Spier took over the reins. Each Thursday from then on the show carried the credit line "produced, edited and directed by William Spier". In 1943 The Roma Wine Company took over the sponsorship of the show and to date has continued to present it for your enjoyment every Thursday evening over the Columbia Broadcasting System.